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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effectiveness of the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program, initiated in 1994 to bring together clusters of doctoral institutions and partner undergraduate colleges to plan programs that introduce graduate students to faculty life in a variety of campus environments and help them become better instructors. Follow-up surveys involving a total of 706 graduate students, faculty, and administrators were conducted in 1995 and 1996 to examine the effectiveness of the approaches used in PFF. It was found that the vast majority of the participants were supportive of the program, and that the benefits to graduate students were considerable. Although faculty at both doctoral institutions and partner undergraduate institutions who were involved in the program were overwhelmingly supportive, the former were less so than the latter. Future challenges to PFF programs include the need to clearly identify responsibilities among institutions and individuals, to secure adequate funding, to view PFF not simply as an add-on to existing doctoral programs but as an integral part of the program itself, and to have an impact on graduate students' ability to work with a diverse mix of undergraduates. (MDM)

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ED 422 765

PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY

THE IMPACT:
ASSESSING EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY PROGRAM 1994-1996

Anne S. Pruitt-Logan, Jerry G. Gaff and Richard A. Weibl

HE 031 360

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Abstract

In 1995 and 1996, Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) staff conducted follow-up surveys of scores of individuals who were involved in an ambitious and innovative national initiative to better prepare future university faculty. The results—from 706 participants in 14 of the 17 "clusters" of schools—validated the general approach.

Although more needs to be learned about the operation and consequences of these new programs, they clearly helped graduate students to become more sophisticated about faculty life, to understand the diversity of colleges and universities, and to expand their career options. The programs also stimulated the professional development of current faculty members who serve as teaching and professional mentors to graduate students. The findings also point to several problems in the operation of these programs and suggest specific solutions. This report presents a profile of the overall experiences in the PFF program and indicates—from the point of view of participants—how well it has accomplished its purposes nationally, and several ways to enhance it.

The Context

Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) is perhaps the most ambitious effort to date to change the culture of preparation for college and university professors. Jointly sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts, the program began in 1993 with a national competition among graduate schools. PFF grants totaling about $1 million were awarded to seventeen universities. Each was required to assemble a *cluster* of diverse nearby institutions—called *partners*—representing the variety of American colleges and universities. This arrangement brought the "consumers" of Ph.D.s together with the "producers," to collaborate in determining the qualities desired in new faculty and in developing programs to prepare them.

In 1994, the seventeen clusters of institutions began creating model programs for incorporating research, teaching, and service components. The sixty-eight partners—liberal arts colleges, comprehensive institutions, community colleges, women's colleges, and historically black colleges and universities—work together so that graduate students can explore faculty life in different environments.

AAC&U and CGS encouraged each cluster of institutions to develop programs based on its own interests, needs, and opportunities. They also urged each group to plan programs consistent with the maturity of its students, to include mentoring in teaching and in other aspects of professional development, to give students in the graduate schools direct experience with various kinds of institutions markedly different from their universities, and to incorporate a broader vision than the traditional focus of graduate preparation.

A Coordinated Series of Surveys

How have the PFF programs benefited those involved? Indeed, why did they elect to become involved? What kind of support systems did they have? Would the participants recommend the program to others?

To answer questions like these, we conducted two coordinated surveys of participants near the conclusion of the first and second years of operation—during spring 1995 and again in spring 1996. We surveyed graduate students, faculty members at both the graduate university and partner institutions, and administrators at the participating institutions.

Questionnaires were prepared at the national office. To review them and give advice about procedures, the PFF staff assembled an advisory committee of five experts in survey research.[1] Coordinators at each cluster of institutions then distributed the questionnaires to the participants they considered to be most involved in the programs. These students, faculty members, and administrators typically returned completed forms to the cluster coordinators, who sent them to the national office.

Because the results of the two surveys were generally similar, in this report we focus primarily on Survey II, occasionally comparing results to those of the earlier survey when it amplifies the meaning of the results. Detailed results of the 1995 survey appeared in *Communicator* (1996).[2]

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents in the two surveys. Because of the decentralized way in which the forms were collected, it is not possible to identify a precise response rate. To the best of our knowledge, 79 percent of the graduate students responded to the first survey, but we cannot be certain enough to venture a specific percentage of the other groups. Suffice it to say that we have reports from 378 individuals in the first survey and 328 in the second study—large but not necessarily representative samples. In Survey II, one-third of the students had been involved in PFF for two years so that it can be assumed that some of these students had completed the first survey as well. It is also safe to assume that some of the same faculty and administrators responded to surveys in both years.

In each of the following sections, we discuss the demographics, benefits, and challenges that all three groups of respondents shared. We will discuss separately the results for graduate students, university faculty members and administrators, and partner faculty members and administrators.

ABSTRACT

THE CONTEXT

A COORDINATED SERIES OF SURVEYS

Respondents by Survey Year and Status

	Survey I (1995)	Survey II (1996)	TOTAL
Graduate Students	186	171	357
Faculty			
University	47	36	83
Partner	87	105	192
Total	144	141	285
Administrators			
University	16	13	29
Partner	32	3	35
Total	48	16	64
GRAND TOTAL	378	328	706

Table 1

Graduate Students

The 171 students who responded to the 1996 survey represent a wide range of academic disciplines, including English and other humanities fields, natural sciences, social sciences, mathematics, and education. Two-thirds of the respondents were within two years of completing the Ph.D. degree, and nearly nine in ten had served as teaching assistants. The students were similar demographically to those who responded in 1995. Fifty-three percent were women, and 53 percent were married. The average age was thirty-two. Eighty-two percent were white and the rest belonged to ethnic minorities, of which 11 percent were African-American, 3 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, 3 percent Chicano, Latino, or Hispanic, and 0.6 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native.

When asked why they participated in PFF, students most often said they wanted to learn about faculty roles and explore their interest in becoming a professor. Most also wanted to enhance their teaching skills and learn about institutions other than the research university.

Two-thirds of the students in both years reported that they had been "fairly" or "very" involved in the PFF program. The two most common kinds of participation were visiting or teaching at a partner institution and attending a series of workshops or seminars on teaching or professional development. Many students also reported working with a mentor at a partner institution or teaching a unit or an entire course with supervision (Table 2). In all of these respects, these students' experiences differed little from those of the earlier respondents.

Graduate Student Experiences in PFF Programs

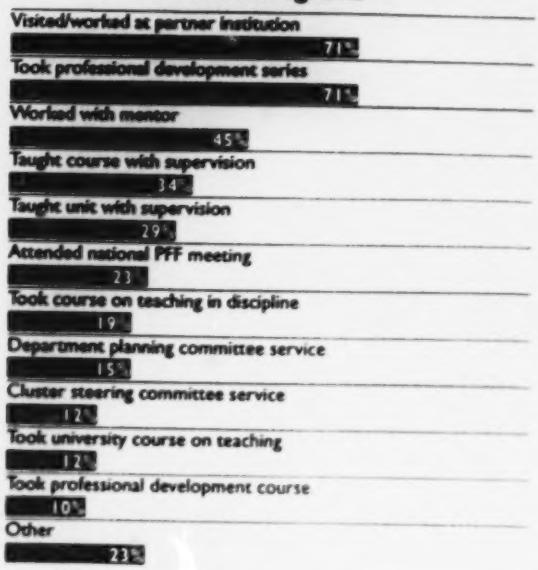

Table 2

In both surveys, when asked whether they would recommend PFF to other doctoral students, 99 percent of the students said "yes" (Table 3). Seventy-three percent said they would recommend their PFF program without reservation because of the career insights it provided. Twenty-seven percent indicated reservations, with troublesome time demands being mentioned most often. Another reservation included difficulties in establishing links with faculty members at partner institutions. The students with reservations advised that future participants should consider PFF only when nearing the end of their course work.

Would You Recommend PFF to Others?

	Yes* Percent	No Percent
Graduate Students		
1995	98.9	1.1
1996	99.4	0.6
University Faculty		
1995	100	0
1996	100	0
University Administrators		
1995	100	0
1996	100	0
Partner Faculty		
1995	100	0
1996	98.2	1.8
Partner Administrators		
1995	100	0
1996	100	0

*without and with reservation

Table 3

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Benefits. We asked students to rate several benefits of participating in PFF. Eighty-two percent said PFF helped them to understand faculty roles, and 81 percent said it helped increase their awareness of diverse institutions. Strengthening interest in an academic career, enhancing the ability to compete in the job market, and developing knowledge of the job search process were checked by 61 to 68 percent of the students. About one-third cited confidence in teaching and knowledge of institutional governance as benefits (Table 4). When asked to list the two major benefits, students' responses clustered around expanded knowledge of different kinds of institutions and broad exposure to teaching methods.

Student Benefits Rated 'Very Much' and 'Quite a Lot'

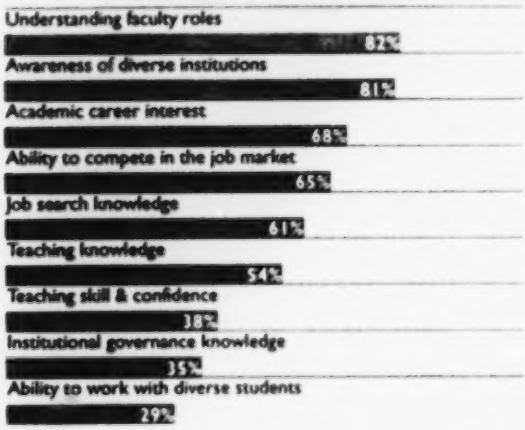

Table 4

The PFF program also assists graduate students in planning their careers by giving them opportunities to explore interests in becoming a college professor. When asked about this, 95 percent reported that, following PFF participation, they were still interested in becoming professors. For 40 percent, interest in an academic career increased. Most others reported that PFF experiences helped to confirm their academic interests, although a few students said PFF helped them to decide to pursue a different career.

Developing the ability to work with a variety of students was ranked lowest on the list of benefits of student participation in PFF. More non-white (58%) than white (24%) participants reported that their PFF experiences improved their ability to work with diverse students "quite a lot" or "very much." We interpret this response to suggest that more work is necessary within the program to assist future faculty to understand the rapidly changing student demographics. This finding leads us to re-think how PFF programs are addressing this issue.

Concerns. One concern about an initiative like PFF that advocates an enriched doctoral program is that it might increase the time it takes to earn a degree. However, in both Survey I and Survey II, 83 percent of responding students reported that they had been able to stay within the time frame they had already planned, and 4 percent even said they were finishing ahead of time. Only 14 percent reported that PFF participation delayed completion of their degree requirements. These differing responses are not surprising in view of the differences among PFF programs. Several feature substantial involvement in a number of activities, while others require more limited or focused involvement.

When asked about their greatest difficulties with the program, students most often cited the need to adjust their academic schedules. For the most part, they were trying to incorporate PFF activities into already heavy schedules without any reduction in other degree requirements. It appears that PFF is simply added on to extensive requirements; it may be necessary to reconfigure graduate programs so that PFF is more integrated into the doctoral experience.

We were interested in whether people whose judgment is important to graduate students supported their involvement in PFF (Table 5). The majority of students reported that they had been encouraged: 92 percent by their department head, 88 percent by other doctoral students, 82 percent by their major advisor, and 99 percent by faculty members at partner institutions. On the other hand, 18 percent reported being discouraged by their major advisor, 14 percent by other faculty members in their department, 8 percent by their department head, and 12 percent by other doctoral students. These were mixed messages; obviously it is important that more faculty and students understand and support the PFF initiative.

People Who Encouraged or Discouraged Graduate Students

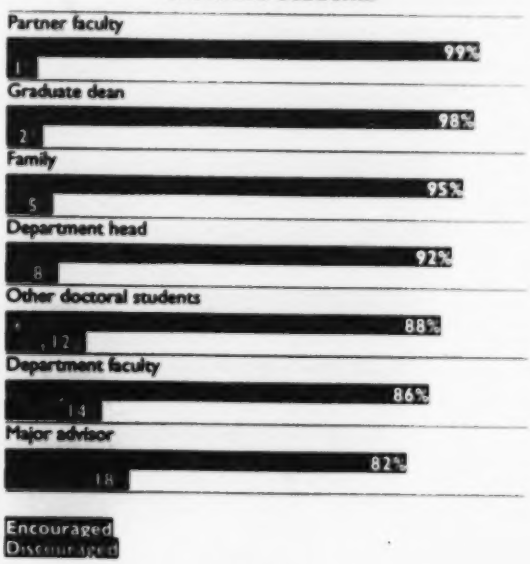

Table 5

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Employment Preferences. One consequence of this faculty preparation program is that the students involved become more aware of the diversity of institutions and thus may emerge with a broadened sense of their career options. In the first survey, we asked students what kinds of institutions they hoped to work for in their first job. Forty-five percent chose a liberal arts college, 21 percent a research university, and 16 percent a comprehensive college or university. In the second survey we asked students to rate various types of institutions according to how attractive they seemed. Seventy-one percent of the respondents found a liberal arts college "very" attractive, as did 68 percent for a comprehensive institution, and 52 percent for a research university (Table 6). It appears that PFF makes it acceptable for graduate students to explore work in places other than research universities. Perhaps PFF programs provide a safe context for expressing this interest to their professors who sometimes prefer their students to work in research universities.

Student Preferences for Four Types of Institutions in Two Surveys: 1995 and 1996

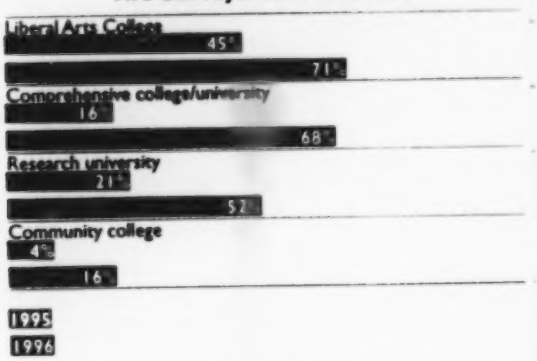

Table 6

We anticipated that the PFF experience would be valued by hiring institutions. To test our theory, we asked the fifty-two students who reported having been involved in academic searches to tell us about those experiences. Eighty percent regarded PFF as very useful, explaining that they believed themselves clearer about the positions for which they were applying and better able to develop appropriate cover letters, curriculum vitae, and teaching portfolios. About one-half said that those who were conducting the searches seemed impressed with the fact that they had been involved in an experience like PFF; only 14 percent reported that interviewers had little interest or saw the PFF program of little relevance.

More involvement, more benefits? More involvement, more benefits? We did several analyses to determine if the extent of student involvement affected reported benefits. Respondents were divided into two groups according to their answers to the question "Overall, how deeply involved have you been in the PFF program?" The first group, those we determined were *More Involved*, answered "fairly" or "very" involved. The second group, those we determined were *Less Involved*, answered "very little" or "moderately."

The More Involved group included a higher percentage of students who had been in the program for two years and they were further along with their degree. Students who reported being more involved had been encouraged by their graduate dean. As expected, the More Involved group participated in more activities. A higher percentage of those More Involved visited or worked at a partner institution, attended professional development workshops, and worked with a faculty mentor at a partner institution (Table 7).

In addition, the attraction to PFF of the More Involved was different: Those More Involved were inclined to envision the program as a chance to enhance their credentials, and they reported greater benefits (Table 8), such as greater understanding of faculty roles (89 versus 71 percent), awareness of diverse institutions (85 versus 76 percent), and ability to compete in the job market (73 versus 50 percent). They regarded dialogues about academic careers and their leadership roles to be especially valuable. It appears that involvement begets greater benefits—the more involvement, the greater the benefit. Of course the reverse might be true, that is, those who are drawing the most benefits avail themselves of the opportunities offered.

Other analyses among subgroups of graduate students—by discipline and gender—showed few differences.

Experiences of More Involved and Less Involved Students

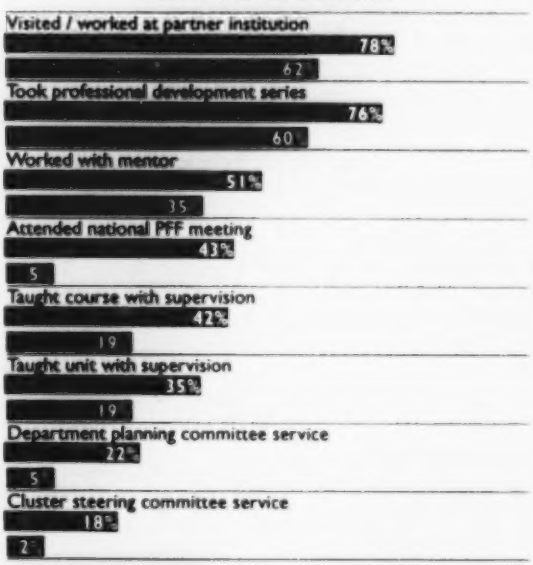

Table 7

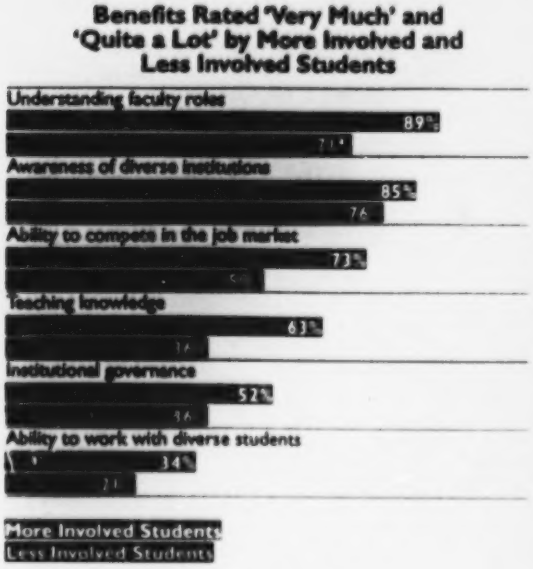

Table 8

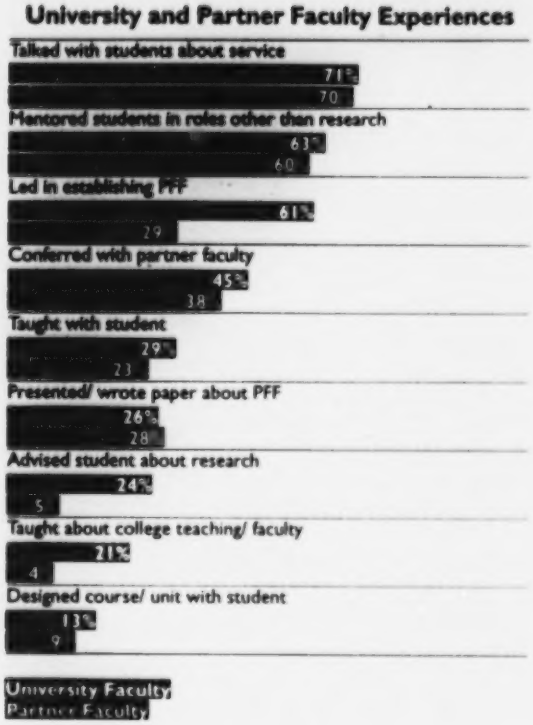

Table 9

University Faculty

Two hundred eighty-five university faculty members responded to the surveys—144 to the first and 141 to the second. The second survey included thirty-six faculty members from doctoral universities and 105 from partner institutions (Table 1). Among university faculty, most respondents were tenured associate or full professors. Thirty-seven percent were women. Eighty-two percent were white, 11 percent African-American, and 8 percent Chicano, Latino or Hispanic. Three-quarters of the thirty-six university faculty had been employed at their university ten or more years, and all had a doctoral degree. As for their fields, the breakdown was 18 percent each from mathematics and English, 14 percent each from biosciences and psychology, and 11 percent each from history and other social science fields.

When asked about why they got involved, 80 percent said they were persuaded that the PFF program would help their students to secure academic jobs, and several said they regarded it as their responsibility to offer students this resource.

As for the roles they played, 61 percent of faculty members said they were involved in establishing the PFF program at their university, 71 percent talked with students about service, 63 percent mentored students in roles other than research, and 45 percent conferred with partner faculty (Table 9). Ninety-seven percent of faculty involved had been encouraged to participate by their graduate dean, 97 percent had also been encouraged by graduate students, and all were encouraged, as well, by faculty in cluster institutions. But the concept of the program was appealing to them, simply approaching faculty with an invitation was an effective way to win their involvement.

What works? Because the seventeen graduate schools designed their programs based on their distinctive interests, needs, and opportunities, they created very different models. Bear in mind the charge to the schools: Working with clusters of local undergraduate institutions, design and pilot models for integrating carefully planned preparation for faculty careers into existing academic programs.

Aware of these variations among programs, we wanted to determine the relative value to faculty of a wide range of PFF activities. The ones that responding faculty members valued most included attending sessions on academic careers and on teaching and learning, and discussing issues with graduate students in other departments. They also valued the opportunity to play a leadership role for PFF in their institution. These faculty said they derive great satisfaction from teaching. PFF allowed them to share this experience with others, and, as a by-product, improve their own teaching. In addition, several respondents reported that their academic departments gained from PFF participation: they began to rethink their missions and curricula, and their students became aware of a wider range of teaching positions. PFF also had a positive effect on university teaching-assistant programs and opened up conversations about training for the professoriate with colleagues in other departments.

All of the thirty-six responding university faculty members said they would recommend PFF to their colleagues (Table 3). Twenty expressed no reservations.

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UNIVERSITY FACULTY

Of the fifteen who did have reservations, most cited the amount of time involved.

Concerns and Suggestions. When we asked about personal concerns, university faculty members noted that their institutional reward system provided no incentives for their work in PFF. Some noted that other colleagues in their department were reluctant to embrace PFF.

Eighty-five percent believed that the graduate students with whom they worked were "very satisfied" with their experience and 15 percent believed they were "moderately" satisfied. Respondents offered several explanations for this satisfaction. They noted that (1) PFF exposes students to faculty life in different kinds of institutions, (2) gives them a chance to lead classes, and (3) to publish and present at conferences, (4) helps them learn techniques for getting an academic job, and (5) gives them personalized attention.

Significant Benefits to University Faculty

- More involved in mentoring students
- Increased focus on students' needs in advising
- Meeting students from other departments
- Increased dialogue among students and faculty
- Opportunities to discuss academic life and college teaching as a career
- Meeting interesting new colleagues
- Greater appreciation for the ways the 'life of the mind' is expressed in other college contexts
- Stimulated about own pedagogy
- Re-charged enthusiasm for teaching
- Better prepared for job search

With respect to the amount of time involved, 78 percent of university faculty said that their involvement took a "modest" amount of time, and 22 percent said it took "a good deal." Yet, only 30 percent reported that their PFF work was considered a part of their official workload. Sixty-six percent said PFF work represented an overload, and only 13 percent said they received additional compensation for the work. Mirroring results in Survey I, these findings suggest the need for greater institutional support and recognition for faculty members who are central to the functioning of PFF programs.

When asked what aspects of PFF stood in the way of making the program permanent, university faculty cited both time and funding. Even though three or four said their involvement took only a modest about of time, they repeatedly mentioned how much of their own time was required to participate. They also expressed concern about the amount of time that graduate students were required to give to the program. In fact, they agreed that time management posed the single greatest difficulty for the students; many had to juggle activities in order to travel to partner institutions and engage in other PFF activities.

Faculty members offered a number of suggestions for solving these problems. First, they wanted to be rewarded financially or with release time, and secondly, they wanted to be publicly recognized in their institution. They agreed that funds were needed for three purposes: to support graduate students, to relieve their own overload, and to compensate partner mentors.

UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS

University Administrators

Table 1 shows that thirteen university administrators responded to the second survey. As expected, the administrators had been active in encouraging graduate students to participate and monitoring the program's progress.

Running throughout administrators' thoughts about the benefits of PFF are two ideas. One is the importance of PFF in improving the education of doctoral students who aspire to academic careers—the value of helping them to become familiar with the academic profession, to become better teachers, and prepare for the job market. The other is the significance of the cluster concept, that is, it brings together institutions representing the variety of colleges and universities that make up the higher education landscape into the service of graduate student preparation for the professoriate, and serves as a vehicle for reshaping doctoral education.

University administrators reported that PFF participation encouraged wider institutional discussions about teaching and broadened faculty members' views of graduate student preparation. In their opinion, PFF also helped graduate students to become better teachers, exposed them to a variety of faculty roles at different institutions, and broadened their employment opportunities. Faculty developed a collegial relationship with the faculty at other institutions, improved their own teaching and mentoring skills, and acquired new information about job opportunities that awaited their graduate students.

When asked about components that benefited graduate students the most, administrators pointed to discussions with their peers in other departments; opportunities to visit or work at a partner institution; and attendance at dialogues on teaching, learning, and academic careers. Administrators said graduate students also gained when they had a chance to play a leadership role in PFF, either in their department or in their university as a whole. This notion confirms our analysis of graduate student benefits by type of involvement.

Sources of support. Because involvement in an interinstitutional collaboration such as a PFF cluster is a novel undertaking for some institutions, we were interested in learning from university administrators what they regarded as the sources of support and the barriers to participation. Prominent among those who supported university involvement were academic administrators, faculty participants, graduate students, and faculty in other PFF institutions. University faculty members who were not participating were the most critical.

People who are curious about a new program often contact those involved. True to expectations, all of the university administrators said non-participating graduate students had inquired about PFF. In addition, 92 percent of the administrators said they received inquiries from additional academic departments, 84

percent from faculty members, and 69 percent from other partner institutions.

Trying to accommodate all of the students seeking to participate is a challenge, albeit a welcome one. But what is more challenging is winning the interest and participation of graduate faculty members.

Most of the administrators—unlike the faculty respondents—believed that personnel policies at their institutions had no bearing on participation in PFF. They did regard as a problem the lack of funds to staff the program and to give students first-hand experiences at other institutions. However, the single most significant barrier to making the program permanent in their institutions, they said, was lack of money to remunerate faculty time at cluster schools. Some administrators reported that they were reluctant to fund an activity that was not yet considered an essential aspect of graduate education, particularly a program that they perceived as benefiting other campuses more than their own. They suggested that their PFF programs could be improved by involving more graduate students, strengthening the cluster, emphasizing mentoring, and providing better publicity and more financial support.

Without exception, all administrators said they would recommend PFF to other institutions (Table 3), although they would caution other universities to make sure that they had sufficient resources and did careful planning.

Partner Faculty

Seventeen percent of partner faculty respondents were from English departments, 16 percent from psychology, 14 percent each from mathematics and biosciences, 5 percent from history, and 6 percent from other social science fields. Other demographics were as follows: 51 percent of partner faculty respondents were women, compared to 39 percent of university respondents. Ninety percent were white, 5 percent African-American, 4 percent Chicano, Latino, or Hispanic, and 2 percent Asian or Pacific Islander. There were no Asian or Pacific Islanders among the university faculty respondents. Compared to university faculty, partner faculty were more recent arrivals at their institutions, with only half having worked for 10 or more years. Eighty-one percent held doctorates compared to 100 percent of university faculty.

Twenty-three percent said they were "very" involved and 55 percent were "moderately" involved in the PFF program. Seventy percent said that their involvement included talking with students about service responsibilities, and 60 percent reported mentoring students in roles other than research (Table 9). The major appeal of PFF to partner faculty was the opportunity to host and work with graduate students and to help them to learn how to teach. All partner faculty said they were encouraged to participate by academic administrators, and 93 percent said they also were encouraged by graduate students. They said practically no one objected to their participation.

What works? Partner faculty members valued attending sessions on academic careers and on teaching and learning, playing a role for PFF in the institution, visiting institutions in their cluster, and interacting with colleagues at other institutions. They also enjoyed discussing issues with graduate students in other departments, an experience that prompted them to reflect on their own work, especially teaching. In addition, they found the mentoring role very satisfying. In general, they believed they were doing something worthwhile.

When asked to judge the value of various PFF program components, partner faculty joined university faculty in listing both the leadership role they played and the opportunity to visit cluster institutions and discuss issues with graduate students.

Like university faculty, they reported that because of PFF, their departments had begun to rethink their purposes and curricula. Several departments even went beyond their PFF responsibilities and structured opportunities for their undergraduate students to talk with PFF students about graduate study, thereby cultivating the idea of going on to graduate school.

Like university faculty, virtually all partner faculty would recommend participation in PFF to other faculty members (Table 3). Twenty-two, however, had some reservations. They said they would caution prospective participants to consider the time required, to gain a full understanding of the program, and to make sure graduate students were clear about program goals before agreeing to take part. Only two partner faculty said they would not recommend PFF—one because of travel distance and the other because of a PFF student's lack of commitment.

Benefits to graduate students, in their view, included the opportunity to lead classes and to explore faculty life in different kinds of institutions, to learn techniques for getting an academic job, and to publish papers and give presentations at conferences. They also viewed the personalized attention from mentors as valuable. Only two partner faculty felt the graduate students were dissatisfied with their experience.

Concerns and Suggestions. When asked to list the major barriers to making PFF permanent, they agreed with university faculty that time and money are the greatest hurdles. Only a few reported that the time they devoted to PFF was considered a part of their official workload, and a few did receive additional compensation.

Partner faculty also offered the same suggestions as university faculty for addressing these barriers. They agreed that PFF graduate students face resistance from some non-participating faculty.

These findings once again suggest that the long-term success of PFF will depend on institutional sup-

port and recognition for partner faculty. Partner faculty also advised that more thought be given to the kinds of projects students undertake and to assuring that students are well prepared to teach, prior to being considered for teaching roles at partner institutions.

Partner Administrators

Only three partner institution administrators responded to the questionnaire (Table 1). Without exception, each would recommend PFF to other institutions (Table 3). Their main role had been to urge their academic departments to take part. They liked the idea of having a hand in preparing students who would eventually become faculty at institutions like their own, and they expected that participating in PFF would broaden contact with faculty at other institutions, particularly the doctoral institution. They reported that their faculty developed colleague relationships with faculty at the research universities, and, moreover, enhanced their own teaching and mentoring skills. Like their faculty respondents, the administrators reported that none of their colleagues discouraged them.

The three partner administrators agreed with university administrators that managing the logistics of multi-institution projects is complicated. They made several suggestions, including the creation of an interdisciplinary faculty team to work on the program with the dean or associate dean, and the clarification of the benefits to their colleges. They reported that faculty at other institutions had inquired about participating in PFF at their own.

Significant Benefits to Partner Faculty?

- Being able to talk about our program
- Meeting interesting and talented graduate students
- Assisting students in understanding our institution
- Able to pass expertise to next 'generation' of scholar-teachers
- Satisfaction from helping graduate students develop professionally
- Having contact with graduate students and their research
- Being stimulated to think about my role as a faculty member
- Interacting with colleagues within the PFF cluster group
- Becoming more intentional about mentoring in an explicit context
- Increased enthusiasm in my own teaching, re-energized me!
- Co-authored article and collaborated on conference presentations with PFF students
- Perspective broadened by seeing ourselves through an outsider's eyes
- Connections to the broader academic community
- New ideas and energy from the graduate students

Achievements to Date

After two years of operation, this program for immersing graduate students in the lives and values of actual faculty members and their institutions, enabling these students to consider the professoriate in depth, remains a viable way to educate aspiring professors. Virtually all participants—graduate students, faculty members, and administrators—remained committed to making graduate preparation more consistent with the actual responsibilities of faculty members.

Benefits to graduate students were considerable. Their awareness of the multiple demands awaiting those entering the professoriate and the variety of institutions of higher education seem to flow directly from important PFF program strategies. The cluster arrangement involving partner institutions is working well.

Paradoxically, the breadth of support by graduate faculty produced the program's major controversy. Both graduate and partner faculty who were involved in PFF were overwhelmingly supportive, but more partner faculty than graduate colleagues were supportive. These mixed messages were troublesome for graduate students. Therefore, one future agenda item that surfaced in both surveys is to address this negative advice by getting the word out about the positive experiences of graduate students and faculty members, as detailed in this report.

We were beginning to see evidence that PFF is not just for the students. Faculty members, too, were reporting that it is a source of professional growth. Indeed, since the majority of faculty were senior professors, PFF is becoming a way to re-energize senior faculty as they work with junior colleagues. We should become more intentional about this aspect of PFF. The leadership of graduate deans in encouraging faculty and graduate students to participate is evident throughout the responses. They and their administrator colleagues at partner institutions were significant players in the success of the program. We should continue to look to administrators for leadership in enlisting faculty into PFF programs.

Future Challenges

Examining challenges and difficulties brings one closer to the complexities of an initiative such as PFF. One such challenge is sustaining the cluster concept. All participants sensed a need to change graduate education for the professoriate. Graduate deans as well as faculty—and in many cases graduate students—led the process of change. They were able to join universities and partner institutions in a common endeavor bridging the gulf that traditionally separates universities and partners and other kinds of institutions. Both groups cooperated and worked hard to overcome the separation that hierarchy and institutional competition breeds.

Obviously there is more to be done. One agenda item is to clearly identify responsibilities—of partner school faculty and administrators, university faculty and administrators, and graduate students. Also on the agenda is the allocation of time and money and appropriate incentives for participation.

We found that PFF program requirements coupled with departmental requirements, perhaps because they are regarded as an add-on, made graduate student participation difficult to manage. In the future, we must help academic departments integrate carefully planned PFF program requirements into existing academic pro-

grams, thus reducing student stress while maintaining the commitment to excellence in research.

Yet another concern is the relatively weak impact that PFF programs were having on the ability of graduate students to work with a diverse mix of undergraduates. This, too, must be remedied, as future faculty will need to know how to work with students who vary widely in interests and ability, and in characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and racial background.

Looking Ahead

PFF seems to be making a difference in the level of programmatic attention to the issue on which it is focused: re-thinking the structure of graduate education for prospective faculty members. Graduate faculty appear to be beginning to look more carefully at the world in which their graduates will teach, and come up with strategies more finely tuned to that world. In partner institutions, more thought is being given to their stake, and hence, their role in shaping the preparation of those who will join their ranks.

The Preparing Future Faculty program was created because people believe modification in graduate education for the professoriate can make an important contribution to educational renewal. This report has attempted to give a profile of the overall program experiences and in some respects to determine—from the point of view of participants—how well the national program is accomplishing its intended purposes. It shows the general value of current programs and several ways to enhance them. A future agenda for clusters is to track the careers of graduates and assess the value of PFF compared to more traditional forms of graduate education. In other words, they must assess how well their individual programs have accomplished their intended purposes from the vantage point of successful careers of PFF graduates.

Although the long-term impact of PFF programs on academic careers is not yet available, the evidence from these early surveys indicates that the programs provide valuable benefits to the graduate students—and others—who are involved. The evidence supports the further development of PFF programs.

Endnotes

1 The advisory committee members were: Peggy Carr, Howard University; Sanford Cohen, Arizona State University; Gerald Gillmore, University of Washington; Darwin Hendel, University of Minnesota; and Robert Menges, Northwestern University. Data were tabulated and analyzed under PFF staff direction by Elizabeth Palmer, a research assistant at Pennsylvania State University.

2 Jerry G. Gaff and Anne S. Pruitt. January 1996. "Experiences of Graduate Students, Faculty Members, and Administrators in Preparing Future Faculty Programs: Year 1," *Communicator*, 12-14.

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AAC&U

The Association of American Colleges and Universities is the national voice for liberal learning. Its membership includes public and private colleges and universities. Through national initiatives, networking, conferences, and publications, AAC&U advances and strengthens liberal education and promotes its integration with professional programs.

CGS

The Council of Graduate Schools is an organization of institutions of higher education in North America engaged in graduate education, research, scholarship, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. Its membership includes 424 universities, granting 97 percent of doctoral degrees awarded in the United States.

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